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City Document.—No. 70.

CITY OF BOSTON.



R E P O R T

OF THE

JOINT SPECIAL COMMITTEE

ON SO MUCH OF THE MAYOR'S ADDRESS AS RELATES TO

A NEW HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE POOR.

In Common Council, November 3, 1853.

Laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

Attest:

W. P. GREGG, Clerk C. C.

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CITY OF BOSTON.

The Joint Special Committee, to whom was referred so much of the address of the Mayor, as relates to a new Hospital for the Insane, beg leave now respectfully further to

REPORT:

That since the 12th of September last, the date of their former Report, the Sub-Committee therein referred to have recommended, as a desirable and satisfactory site for a Hospital, a lot of land in West Newton, belonging to Mr. Joseph A. Veazie, formerly a part of the Winechester Farm, bounded on the north by the road from Newton to Dedham, and on the south and west by Charles River; containing a fine growth of wood land, affording opportunity for drives, &c., and beautifully situated. The soil is believed to be very good, and an abundant supply of pure water for all purposes can be easily obtainable from the River. The distance by a fine straight road over the Mill Dam is $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and by the Charles River Branch Railroad, fifteen minutes ride from the City. The Committee are assured that every facility in the way of stations, cars, &c. will be afforded by the Directors of the Railroad, and that a satisfactory arrangement in regard to the taxes which may be assessed upon the property by the town, in case the City should purchase it, may be made. The quantity of land proposed by the Sub-Committee to be purchased is about one hundred acres. In the above recommendation, provided the land can be obtained at a reasonable price, the Committee unanimously concur.

The Committee have felt great reluctance in coming to a conclusion that it is necessary for the City to incur the expense of erecting a New Hospital, but the painful experience of the past two years seems to leave no other alternative. Other plans and suggestions have been fully considered by the Committee, such as the enlargement of the present Hospital at South Boston, and the fitting up of the old House of Industry ; but the first is rendered impracticable for want of room, and as regards the last, it would clearly be unwise to expend money upon that building, with the unsatisfactory result, of having entirely inadequate accommodations, and with the certainty that within a short time, the whole would have to be abandoned as entirely unfit for the purpose. The question of building upon Deer Island has also been considered, and on careful examination of the Island, it has been found wholly impossible to appropriate land enough to afford sufficient territory to allow of labor and space for proper exercise for the patients in the open air, so effective as remedial measures for the insane. It certainly would be unwise and inexpedient to make a large expenditure in *any* place, where the location would be in any way objectionable, and such the Committee are constrained to believe, would be the case, if the Hospital should be placed on Deer Island. Under all circumstances, therefore, the Committee think that no suitable location within the County of Suffolk can be had, nor indeed if any could be, there cannot be a doubt, that some rural position would be altogether more desirable—a position which would, for many years, perhaps half a century, be suitable for it. It will be readily conceded by all, that a retired situation, away from the noise and excitement of busy life, but yet so near as to be conveniently and easily accessible from the City, is the most suitable

situation for a Hospital for the Insane. The Committee believe that the site now recommended, embraces all these desirable requisites.

With regard to the pressing necessity for further and ample accommodations for our Insane, it is certainly unnecessary for the Committee to add much to what has already been so repeatedly stated, by the Board of Visitors of our Hospital, and in the former report of this Committee.

It is a painful fact, that *all* the Hospitals for the Insane in our State, have for a long period, been overrun with patients, and the new State Institution at Taunton will be filled immediately on its completion. This terrible disease seems to be fixed upon our community, and the subject must be dealt with as a *permanent* evil to be provided for. Boston, which has heretofore been first in all its appointments for the relief of human suffering, is, in this particular, far behind many of her sister cities, and she cannot be just to her high character and the Christian sentiment of humanity, till she has a first class Hospital for the Insane. The people of Boston have never failed to approve of the establishment of any necessary institution for the alleviation of human misery. Such a necessity now exists, and the Committee commit the subject with confidence to the wise consideration of the City Council, with the hope that the proper preliminary measures may, without unnecessary delay, be adopted, to accomplish the object.

With these views the Committee respectfully recommend the adoption of the following Resolve and Order.

For the Committee,

BENJAMIN SEAVER, *Chairman*.

Resolved, That in view of the increasing necessity for further and better accommodation for the Insane poor of our City, it is expedient that early action be taken by the City Council for the erection of a New Hospital, to be constructed with all the modern improvements for the treatment of this disease, to meet not only the present, but the future wants which our growing City may be called upon to provide for, and meet.

Ordered, That in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee who have had this subject under consideration, the said Committee in conference with the Board of Visitors of the Boston Lunatic Hospital, and under the direction of the Joint Standing Committee on Public Buildings, be authorized and empowered to purchase the site recommended in the Report of said first mentioned Committee, provided the same can, in their opinion, be effected at a fair price.



